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ABSTRACT

A considerable body of research has shown that Guided Reading lessons provide the structure students need to develop specific ways to approach reading a text. In guided reading, teachers first provide instruction for the reading involving general discussion of the text to build background information. Second, children participate in supported reading where teachers have introduced the story followed by all children reading aloud the identified text. During supported reading teachers observe each child's application of reading strategies and provide necessary support. Third, when reading is complete, students may participate in follow-up activities that include additional instruction on specific strategies. The goal of guided reading is to assist children in becoming independent and fluent readers by providing instruction in effective reading strategies. This topical bibliography and commentary reviews research on guided reading, giving examples of how teachers can use guided reading to benefit their classes. It also gives strategies for using both core-reading selections in textbooks and separate texts from other sources. Lists 3 Internet resources and 14 references. (NKA)

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Guided Reading

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Introduction

In the last 20 years, a considerable body of research has shown that Guided Reading lessons provide the structure students need to develop specific ways to approach reading a text. In guided reading, first teachers provide an instruction to the reading involving general discussion of the text to build background information. Second, children participate in supported reading where teachers have introduced the story followed by all children reading aloud the identified text. During supported reading teachers observe each child's application of reading strategies and provide the necessary support. Third, when reading is complete, students may participate in follow-up activities that include additional instruction on specific strategies. The goal of guided reading is to assist children in becoming independent and fluent reader by providing instruction in effective reading strategies. (Fawson & Reutzel, 2000)Books and articles conclude that such guidance results in significantly improved performance scores.

This report reviews some of that research, giving examples of how teachers can use Guided Reading to benefit their classes. It also gives strategies for using both core-reading selections in textbooks and separate texts from other sources.

Improving Processing and Comprehension

O'Mallan et al (1983) document how Guided Reading procedures affected the comprehension and summary writing skills of fifth-graders. Students in the treatment group increased their ability to paraphrase, decreasing their reliance on verbatim repetition of the given text. By contrast, the control group repeated the text twice as much as the treatment group did, showing that the typical approach to content area textbook reading encouraged them to simply feed back what they read. The authors conclude that with further teacher training in this area, students' abilities should improve accordingly.

Chevalier, Del-Santo, Scheiner, Skok, and Tucci (2002) reported that using explicit instruction of reading strategies through the implementation of guided reading groups improved elementary student's comprehension. Guided reading presented students with text that met their instructional reading levels and students were guided through the text. The author suggested that guided reading enabled growth in comprehension by allowing students to be challenged without being frustrated.

Mooney (1995) demonstrates that guided reading can help intermediate students make informed choices about choosing appropriate paths through and beyond the text. Specific skills they will develop are predicting, sampling and confirming the text, plus regaining control when they lose meaning. Mooney's research showed that students with these abilities could handle increasingly complex challenges in math, science, and social studies texts. "The questions asked during a Guided Reading session show students how to read beyond the superficial, and to assume the responsibility for considering, evaluating, and assimilating what they read."

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Twining (1981) found that applying some implications of schema theory could benefit courses on short stories. He outlines several ways that teachers can use guided reading activities to help students link their own previous knowledge and experience with story content. Such activities draw on a list of questions and outlined suggestions that:

- Direct students to note certain aspects of the story;
- Hint at important relationships;
- Stimulate further thought;
- Prompt more questions;
- Actively involve readers in the story;
- Require students to draw conclusions that apply to "the real world".

Basic Reading

Swann (1997) investigated the effectiveness of Emergent Reader Literacy Instruction (ERLI), an eclectic approach to teaching reading that incorporates phonics, basal texts, quality literature, and writing instruction through the daily inclusion of Guided Reading. When first-grade ERLI subjects and a control group tested for "The Basic Reading Inventory," the ERLI group scored significantly higher than the control group at the independent level for comprehension and at the frustration level for vocabulary. Findings provided strong evidence that multiple traditional reading methods work effectively.

Schmitt and Baumann (1990) analyzed elementary teachers' interactions with students during guided reading of basal reader selections. They thereby determined the extent to which these interactions promote students' metacomprehension abilities. They found that teachers themselves assumed most of the responsibility for readers' comprehension, rather than teaching in a way that promoted metacomprehension abilities.

Poetry

Dwyer (1982) explains how a guided reading of poetry can combine aesthetic appreciation with developing essential reading and writing skills. His brief but very useful Poetry Guide to a poem on Lincoln specifies, step-by-step, what students may gain in vocabulary and comprehension by responding to clearly focused questions about the poem.

For instance, a Poetry Guide asks students to match a list of words used in the poem with synonyms in an opposite list. Another exercise requires paraphrasing some of the poem's key metaphorical phrases. The Guide also poses questions about the text that examine both literal and inferential comprehension. "What does the poem say that tells us Lincoln loved people? Does the poet think everyone loved Lincoln?" For questions of value judgment readers must articulate their responses based on personal values. The Guide also requires exploring unusual words and phrases, and using imagination. "What do you think the author would say to Lincoln if he could say one sentence to him today?" Dwyer found that such a poetry guide both fosters an aesthetic appreciation of literature and teaches essential reading skills.

Advance Organizers, Directed Reading Activity

Kirkman and Shaw (1997) studied the effects of an oral-formatted comparative advance organizer (CAO) on learners' immediate and delayed retention of subject matter. Using a 240-word introductory passage that incorporated D. Ausubel's theory of meaningful learning (1963), they compared students' performance under three treatment conditions:

- One group used only the oral CAO;
- Another group used the oral CAO, plus a paraphrase of the text before oral instruction;
- The third group used no CAO.

Findings showed that no single treatment condition was more effective than another in facilitating immediate and delayed retention of the text. Moreover, students who received the paraphrased text before the CAO did not more successfully recall the subject matter.

O'Shea and Sindelar (1984) investigated the effects of repeated readings with cues on reading fluency and comprehension. Their subjects were 30 third-graders reading at or above grade level, using three equally difficult passages. They instructed half the students to read for meaning and the other half to read for speed accuracy. They repeated these cues before each reading; timed the children during the final reading of each passage; recorded their errors; and estimated their reading rate in words per minute. Data revealed that:

- Reading fluency increased by 22% from one to three readings, and by 9% from three to seven readings, independent of the attentional cues given;
- Children cued to read rapidly and accurately shoed greater fluency, regardless of how many times they read the passage;
- Children cued for meaning showed greater comprehension; and
- Three to four readings seem optimal, since by then students gain most in fluency and comprehension.

Almanza (1997) examined the effectiveness of cooperative learning in small groups with whole classroom instruction using the Directed Reading Thinking Activity (DRTA) during reading. For this eight-week study 53 sixth-graders read stories from the same basal reader. After completing each story, each child took a comprehension test. Those in cooperative learning groups read stories on their own, and wrote questions or comments in their reading log.

The next day, students discussed the story. They worked in groups for about four weeks, and then they worked individually for another four weeks, using the DRTA strategy. After completing the story, the children answered questions about it independently. Results of a final comprehension test showed that most children in the cooperative groups scored higher than when they used DRTA.

Basal Readers

In a monograph of 1984, Beck analyzed the results of her study of commercial reading programs. She concluded that basals, attempting to be everything to everybody, often set too many goals for lessons. Beck suggests redesigning basal programs to feature setting specific directions for story lesson reading; applying schemata; posing after-reading questions; and sequential questioning based on plot events.

Testing a direct instruction paradigm that teaches sixth-graders how to identify a text's main idea, Baumann (1983) gave two experimental groups--strategy and basal--and a control group eight 30-minute lessons over a two-week period. The strategy group received intensive, directed instruction in main ideas consisting of four steps: introduction, example, teacher-directed application, and independent practice. The basal group received all the lessons on main ideas, plus supporting details from a basal reader series. The control group had an equivalent amount of instruction with unrelated vocabulary development exercises. Results showed that:

- The strategy group outperformed both the basal and the control groups in their ability to recognize both explicit and implicit paragraph and passage main ideas for a main idea outline;
- The basal group outperformed the control group in their ability to freely recall the main ideas;
- Treatment groups did not differ in their ability to freely recall the main ideas;
- More capable readers consistently outperformed the less capable on all dependent variables; and
- There were no interactions between treatments and achievement levels.

Internet Resources

* Guided Reading and Thinking
Describes materials needed and procedures for implementing guided reading. (Saskatchewan Learning)
http://www.sasked.gov.sk.ca/docs/ela/e_literacy/guided.html
* Guided Reading (full-text article)
An excerpt from *Apprenticeship in Literacy: Transitions Across Reading and Writing* by Linda J. Dorn, Cathy French, and Tammy Jones. Describes how to use guided reading in the classroom to meet the different needs of students as well as provide real class example of this practice.
http://www.stenhouse.com/pdfs/0088ch04.pdf
* Guided Reading
Provides information regarding: what is guided reading, the benefits and principles of guided reading, and what materials are needed for guided reading groups. (From MCPS Early Literacy Guide)
http://www.mcps.k12.md.us/curriculum/english/guided_rdg.html

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